

# **VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**

1502B Williamson Road, NE ♦ Roanoke, VA 24012  
540-342-1231

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## **Comment to the Medicaid Innovation and Reform Commission**

The Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living is a nonprofit consortium of the 16 Virginia Centers for Independent Living (CILs). Our focus is to provide advocacy and support so that people with disabilities are able to live independently. CILs are consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential, private, non-profit organizations.

Expanding Medicaid to provide health care for people with disabilities currently not eligible for Medicaid will have a positive impact on the quality of life of people with disabilities. People with disabilities can benefit significantly from health care that maintains current disability and health conditions as well as prevent further disability and debilitating health conditions.

People with disabilities who have worked for a required period of time and who experience deterioration of their disability or health condition resulting in a loss of employment typically have a two year waiting period before becoming eligible for Medicare. During this two year waiting period, if their annual income is above 80% of the poverty level they will not be eligible for Medicaid (unless they are eligible for Medicaid long term care supports) if Virginia does not expand Medicaid. Exasperation of their disability and potentially increased health care needs may not be addressed due to the lack of health care during the two year waiting period for Medicare.

People between the ages of 19 and 64 with disabilities that do not impact their ability to work are generally not eligible for Virginia Medicaid. Many of these people work for low wages. People in these circumstances with annual income under 100% of the poverty level need Medicaid to gain access to health care that can prevent their disability or health condition from worsening resulting in the potential loss of employment.

We urge you to expand Medicaid.

Karen Michalski-Karney  
President  
kmichalski@brilc.org

### **VIRGINIA'S CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**

Access Independence – Winchester ♦ Appalachian Independence Center – Abingdon ♦ Blue Ridge Independent Living Center – Roanoke ♦ Clinch Independent Living Services – Grundy ♦ disAbility Resource Center – Fredericksburg ♦ Eastern Shore Center for Independent Living – Exmore ♦ Endependence Center, Inc. – Norfolk ♦ Endependence Center of Northern Virginia – Arlington ♦ Independence Empowerment Center – Manassas ♦ Independence Resource Center – Charlottesville ♦ Junction Center for Independent Living – Norton ♦ Lynchburg Area Center for Independent Living – Lynchburg ♦ Peninsula Center for Independent Living – Hampton ♦ Piedmont Independent Living Center – Danville ♦ Resources for Independent Living – Richmond ♦ Valley Associates for Independent Living – Harrisonburg